

The Catch

Cordova's Own Literary & Arts Journal

SPRING 2024



Lovely Bones // Watercolors & Ink by Jude Nel Horney

emerge
Issue No. 12

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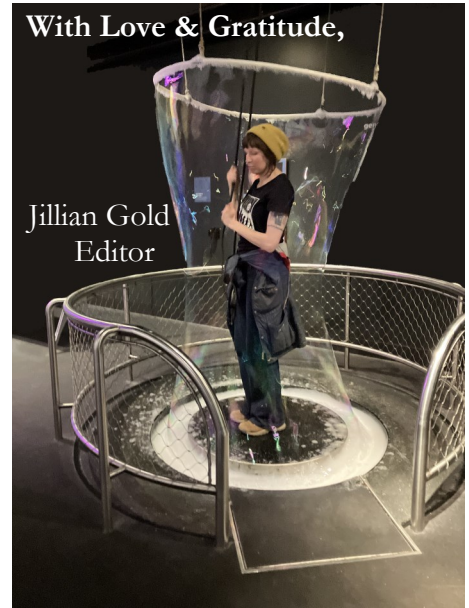
With the harbor nearly rebuilt and the cottonwood buds fat with sap, life returns to our little town. For me, there is the initial joy of revival, the shock of the unfolding bustle, and then somewhere along the way I fall into step and just enjoy all that our special nook in this great, big world has to offer. Our literary & arts journal is one such offering. We are officially three years deep into this endeavor, and the pool of talent and creativity in this town seems bottomless. As ever, **THANK YOU** to all of our contributing artists & writers, and to a community that supports the arts!

See you in the Summer . . .



With Love & Gratitude,

Jillian Gold
Editor



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

ALL AGES. ALL MEDIUMS. NO ENTRY LIMIT.

Feature your art & writing in the **Summer 2024** issue (*No. 13*).

The theme is:

Bounty

Due by June 15th.

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Seasonal Catch

WRITTEN WORKS

Christina Anderson // *Page 14*
Kate Arduser // *Pages 4, 9, 15, 25*
Rob Brown // *Page 33*
Gabe Cap // *Page 32*
Alysha Cypher // *Pages 11, 26*
Barbra Donachy // *Pages 34-35*
Jack Donachy // *Page 18*
Jeanie Gold // *Page 13*
Jillian Gold // *Pages 8, 27*
Jude Nel Horney // *Page 10*
Joseph // *Page 29*
Polly Keats // *Pages 20-23*
Aviva Kinoko // *Page 6*
Greg Mans // *Page 7*
Jacob Noah // *Page 12*
Simone Raymond // *Page 28*
Steve Schoonmaker // *Pages 17, 30-31*
Peter Solberg // *Pages 16, 24*
Kate Trudeau // *Page 5*
Tina Yo-Ma // *Page 19*

ARTWORKS

Sergei Bogatchev // *Pages 4, 6, 27*
Rob Brown // *Page 33*
Alysha Cypher // *Pages 20, 22*
Jude Nel Horney // **FRONT COVER**; *Pages 5, 23*
Cora Kocan // *Page 12*
P. Payne // *Pages 24, 25*
Pamela Peterson // **BACK COVER**
Peter Solberg // *Page 16*
Mazie VanDenBroek // *Page 15*
Cristina Vican // *Page 10*

PHOTOGRAPHS

Christina Anderson // *Page 14*
Barbra Donachy // *Page 34*
Jack Donachy // *Pages 18, 34*
Reid Garcia // *Page 26*
Jillian Gold // *Page 9*
David Saiget // *Pages 11, 29, 31*
Kate Trudeau // *Page 8*
Brian Varner // *Pages 7, 28*
Tina Yo-Ma // *Page 19*

Title Lettering by Jillian Gold

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There is occasional use of forceful language in this publication. ***Please exercise reader discretion.***



Watercolors by Sergei Bogatchev

New Eyes

By Kate Arduser

When I woke up with new eyes
And could see soft inside hard
I started spending a lot more time
Between breaths.



Chutes and Ladders

By Kate Trudeau

Grief. it's an
endless game
of Chutes and Ladders
No quick escape.
You can't quit
I used to think I could
roll till I won
But
Must roll a one.
A one.
Another one.
One foot after the other.

Every time I grab at the ladder
Grasping for easy escape—
Like my body
Holding on
though death
Was infiltrating it
like a cavity —

I Roll
too high
And realize
I am two months out
Two months too hollow
After two full moons

Shoot.
Shoot.
Chute.

There is no ladder to the finish
No easy win
True escape isn't the end
Winning isn't reaching the last square

Winning
Is keeping sadness soft
malleable
Uncalcified

Winning
Is still being
able to laugh
On the slide

Ink Illustration by Jude Nel Horney



The Samsāra

By Aviva Kinoko

As nights rise into days, a cozy warm home is overtaken by layers of dust
In the manner that small particles of dry solid matter over crowd the space.
The capacity of confined sight clouds the clarity of the elements.
The narrow ability to comprehend distorts authenticity.
The limiting senses produce an illusion of separation generating fear and alienation.
That's when lovers merge into strangers and brothers become enemies.
The shell of a seed is ruptured by a swollen embryo as growth seems to be comprised of suffering.
So strange is the natural selection.
Seemingly broken and fractured it is.
As dawn arrives it's the cracks that allow the light to penetrate through.
As the shattered pieces become illuminated.
A soul is loaning the space it takes up in a body.
An existence in this form is temporarily walking on this earth.
Nothing of this is perpetual.
Constantly morphing into infinite formation of matter, forever emerging gracefully with existence.
For this, lovers are bound to return to love again and brothers are sure to be brethren.



Seashells // Pencil by Sergei Bogatchev

Trusting Forward

By Greg Mans



Montana Salmonflies by Brian Varner

A few brave green soldiers reach their tips up out of gray dirt and last year's leaves
to touch this near March soft sun.

Snow fell just two days ago but they don't seem to mind,
one small bunch giving way to yellow flowers that open during the day.

Did they doubt when those 2 inches blanketed the ground on Wednesday?

I fear defeat and wrong just watching her sitting across me shift in her chair.

While fishing for steelhead on a sunny afternoon with snow still hanging along the bank,
my brother watched thousands of stoneflies hatch from the river.

In their short 11 months alive,
these bugs will know flight and life above water for but a week.

The sight was so impressive, he set down his rod, knelt in the grass and watched for hours.



Knit Hat and Photograph by Kate Trudeau

Spring Push

By Jillian Gold

It's in the crocus
The daffodil
All those bannermen of spring.
Hark! They seem to sing
As they emerge, faces yet seen
Cloaked within
Petals that mirror in hands of ascetics
Voices unhindered
They sing
Of snowmelt and riverflow
They sing
Of sunshine and tomorrow

Arrive

By Kate Arduser

There is a smell
that hits me in the face to tell me it's spring.
So strong
and so alive.
Not here, and then all the sudden here.
Yet, somehow—
delicate in its unfolding.
This smell without a scent.

Like
the ground waking up
wet and crisp
thicker than winter
sharp, sparkly, squinty, cold edges with warm inside
and new.

And it has arrived!
And I pull it in and in and in
through my nose
to tell myself to arrive too.



Spring Pushing Winter Out by Jillian Gold

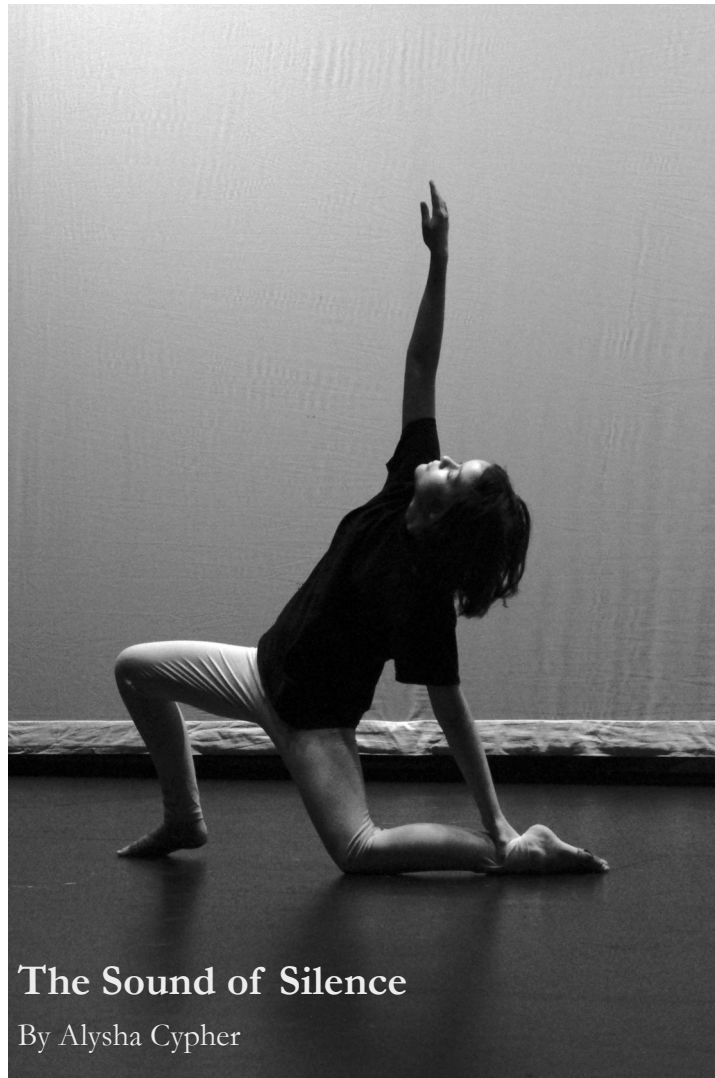
Mycah—Like the Rock

By Jude Nel Horney

Step out
Into the sunlight
Let photons dance
On every curve and angle
Illuminating
Each magnificent cell
Of your beautiful being
Each perfect imperfection
Exposed
Refracting light and love
You are shiny

Alephgance by Cristina Vican // Ink, Window Crayon & Paper





Photograph by David Saiget

The Sound of Silence

By Alysha Cypher

There came a spider filled with desire, looking to fill a hole,
So it stole a child, known to be wild, wanting to take its toll.

It concealed its wile beneath a smile, and convinced her the sky was green.
It altered reality, created duality, in order to get in between.

Although it feeds her, it also bleeds her, filling her with need,
For her brain is on fire, the spider's a liar, she will never be freed.

Yet there is no cage, just a page, written inside her soul.
As she grows sadder, she seeks the ladder, any way out of this hole.

A bird descends and sees her, frees her, giving back her fire,
With the last of her might, she stands to fight, the spider dies by her.

With the spider beat, she finds her feet, which lead her to the fog.
There she grows quiet, afraid to try it, maybe gets a dog.

The demons need tea, to set her free, and go their merry way,
So she goes below to find the flow, and remembers how to play.

Her skin ignites, below the Northern lights, rising up above,
Tall as a tower, full of power, only emitting Love

Emergence

By Jacob Noah

Comes from remembrance

A bright laugh from some love space

Some choice force of sorts



Welcome Home

By Jeanie Gold

On January twenty-fourth
you arrived in the world,
weighing seven pounds, three ounces;
A miraculous gift unfurled.

With ten fingers and toes
and thick dark-hued hair,
framing the trace
of your angelic face.

Nine days later with fever high
and cheeks flushed,
whisked-off in a rush
to a hospital nearby.

For a lengthy stay
of poking and prodding,
treatments and tests,
parading doctors, nurses, and techs.

Assisted with oxygen, suction,
monitors, fluids and medicine
through intravenous lines;
Aspects of a many-faceted design.

Enveloped in healing wishes,
thoughts and prayers,
and tender loving care
with family always at your side.

Such a tiny, little guy
so dear and so sweet,
displaying endurance and grit
of a seasoned athlete.

Finally . . . improvement,
emerging from the fray;
Thankfully, getting better,
day-by-day.

At last, your discharge slated,
with joyous celebration
and grateful anticipation.

Welcome home
brave, beautiful boy . . .
Welcome home!



Yearlings

By Christina L Anderson—*F/V Captains Choice*

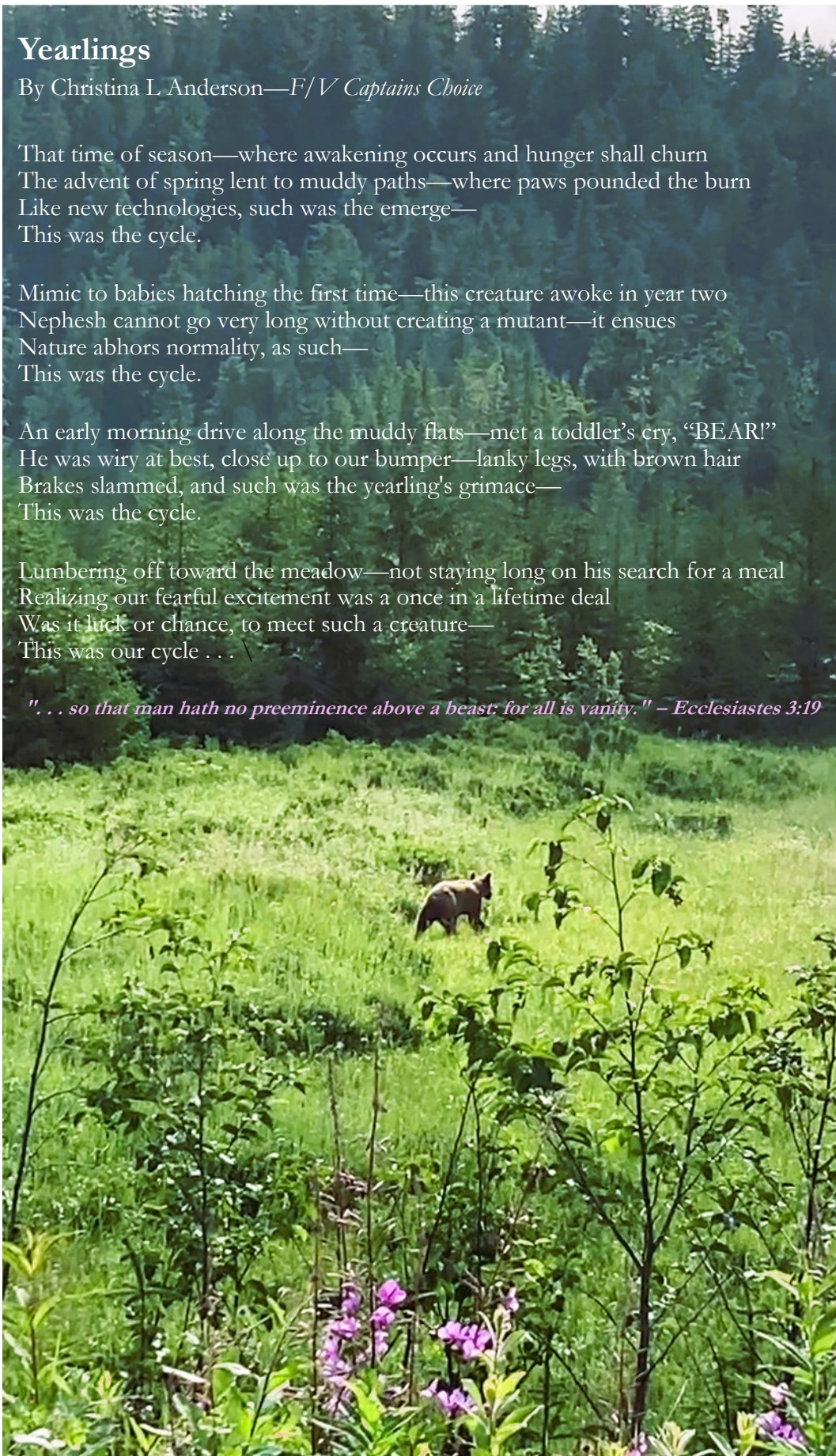
That time of season—where awakening occurs and hunger shall churn
The advent of spring lent to muddy paths—where paws pounded the burn
Like new technologies, such was the emerge—
This was the cycle.

Mimic to babies hatching the first time—this creature awoke in year two
Nephesh cannot go very long without creating a mutant—it ensues
Nature abhors normality, as such—
This was the cycle.

An early morning drive along the muddy flats—met a toddler's cry, "BEAR!"
He was wiry at best, close up to our bumper—lanky legs, with brown hair
Brakes slammed, and such was the yearling's grimace—
This was the cycle.

Lumbering off toward the meadow—not staying long on his search for a meal
Realizing our fearful excitement was a once in a lifetime deal
Was it luck or chance, to meet such a creature—
This was our cycle . . .

" . . . so that man hath no preeminence above a beast; for all is vanity. " – Ecclesiastes 3:19



Still frame from video shot by Miles Nuzzi & Nana Christina

Emerging

By Kate Arduser

Emerging doesn't necessarily
mean going anywhere



Alpine Meadow above Power Creek by Mazie VanDenBroek
Encaustic Painting (*melted colored beeswax on wood*)



Illustration by Peter Solberg

Skunk Cabbage

By Peter Solberg

Has its own heat source

Emerging from the wet snow

Bright yellow flowers

Earthman (Somewhere)

By Steve Schoonmaker—*F/V Saulteur*

Somewhere between a Jaguar and a Polar Bear
an Earthman
spinning
in the once green footing
wheel ruts—wheel ruts
in the once green footing
holding free
tender
and alive
for so long now—for so long now

Somewhere between a Jaguar and a Polar Bear
a Nomad bound
now towned
by the roads
by the Power loads
in the lines of our kind
by the clocks hands of time—by the clocks hands of time

Somewhere between a Jaguar and a Polar Bear
an Atmosphere
a Green Blue Planet
Sunlight
Evaporation
Circulation
Ocean's Gale
Metamorphosis
Photosynthesis
Green's beauty
unconcerned
as the air
of any of my cares
Somewhere

Somewhere between a Jaguar and a Polar Bear
an Earthman
Nature's child
well aware—well aware
somewhere

Somewhere between a Jaguar and a Polar Bear

You Want to Visit? Famous Last Words . . .

By Jack Donachy

They Gaze This Way Dreamy by Jack Donachy



How best to come?
What does it matter
if this is where you belong you'd
be here by now
lone dirt road ice in winter
soup in spring
come May dust catches in your throat till
summer rains return
wind never leaves
trails overgrown in salmonberry
brambles scrub alders jungle thick

Ever smaller planes
(a long way from where you live)
or stick to big planes to the city
500 miles from here
where from behind city walls
they gaze this way dreamy
imagining us out here where
we know cities
like where you live

walls and ruts make it hard to leave
(you say the chains are only metaphors?)
from there take the ferry
to the bay
catch a ride on a skiff
around the cape
up the river
dress for it
always colder in a boat

if you wear the right boots
we can go anywhere
but it's a long way
to those flowers I was telling you about
if you're up for it we could hike into a cloud . . .

Rosebud
Now comes good sailing
moose Indian
Does nobody understand?
God bless Captain Vere!
Cypripedium

A Holy Place

By Tina Yo-Ma

Rugged trail,
Brilliant turquoise wide sky,
Dazzling sun.

Eyes focus
On tall red rock outcroppings,
Resembling three ROTUND
Indigenous females
Wrapped in blankets.
Sensing a Holy place.

Climbing the mountain alone,
Rocks fiercely tumble,
Half-way up my trek
Like a stampede of determined Bison

Fear expands my lungs,
Eyes bulge,
Body freezes.

Calling my ancestors' names,
One-by-one,
While poised on a large rock, immobile.

Their faces surround me.
Peering down from the vastness of sky.
Profound comfort prevails within.
My wide eyes fixate,
On their strong countenance.
Rocks finally subside their frantic free-fall,

Crawling downward,
Standing firmly on safe ground,
Palms merge,
Bowing respectfully to Mother Earth.

Raising palms skyward
Honoring Father Sky,
Bowing in gratitude in all four directions.

Tears streak my cheeks like a raging river.
Sensing a very Holy place.



Ghost Ranch, NM by Tina Yo-Ma

Emergence / Cymothoa

By Polly Keats

I am sitting by a man talking about high school. It is my second party in the city. The man's name is Zaid and he is warm and smells exactly right. I am drinking a beer and he is drinking a beer and we are on the couch at the apartment of my roommate Elizabeth's friend from drama club whose name I don't know. Elizabeth is on another couch with another boy; she is talking loudly about music because she is from New York, but she looks at me and we smile at each other. We have each other's back.

Zaid is from Dallas. He hates Dallas. He says the city is one big, air-conditioned carpet that punishes you for your doubts. Right now, that sounds like poetry and I'm okay with poetry, because maybe this isn't my first beer and anyway, isn't that what college is for? I've already declared a business major; I can be a romantic in my free time.

Zaid asks about my hometown, and I say I don't know how to talk about it yet, which feels very insightful. Maybe it isn't. I don't know how to talk about anything right now, or ever. *What is a hometown?* He laughs appreciatively and asks how I talked about it when I lived there. I say the kids play RuneScape and school sports and drink. He says everywhere is like that. I say that's exactly it. *How would we know?*

Zaid says he has class in the morning, but I kind of snuggle into him. I see Elizabeth give me a questioning look and I try to make a face that says I'm in control. Zaid leans down and delicately nibbles my ear, says he hopes he sees me again; can he text me? Then he stands up. I realize I'm okay with this and Elizabeth was right to give me the side-eye, because I am capital D DRUNK. I give Zaid something like my number and he gets his jacket and steps out into the night. I rearrange myself to fit the empty couch and start to doze off, until Elizabeth lifts me by my arms and walks me home.

* * *

(continues on next page)



Followers of Floyd submitted by Alysha Cypher // Paint Markers on *Last Supper* by Ray Floyd

Contributors: Rob Brown, Ryan Casey, Alysha Cypher, Anne Farbman, Aviva Kinoko, Shane Shepherd

“How many of you know what a meme meant originally?” My marketing professor has pink hair and looks younger than me. She has a slide on the screen showing that stupid “cheezburger” cat.

“The term was invented by Richard Dawkins in 1976 to mean a transmissible unit of culture, the way a gene is a transmissible unit of heredity. Originally it meant a single idea, or part of an idea, that could be spread and adopted and, most importantly, traced from one person to the next.”

I write: *Meme. Dawkins, like a gene. DNA? Idea traceable.* I am going to ace this class.

“We think of culture as an ancient heritage but, in reality, culture is only one generation old. We learn it in our lifetimes, and what we learn, we carry, what we miss, we lose. Less than a generation even, sometimes.”

She pulls up a picture of George W. Bush saying, “All your base are belong to us,” to a man in a turban.

“How many of you know the ‘All Your Base’ meme?” Hands go up around the room.

“I bet by the time you're teaching this class, not one of your students will have any idea what you're talking about. Not only is culture always renewing itself, it's ephemeral. The appearance of permanence and eternity is an illusion and, in the field of marketing, a prestige.”

I write: *Eternity is prestige. Constant renewal. One generation at a time.* I write: *I teach this class.*

My ear itches. Like I have the world's most painful ball of earwax, my ear itches something fierce.

* * *

The campus pool is enormous and warm. Not as warm as the pool I grew up swimming in, but a welcome relief from the autumn air. I'm here for lap swimming with Hannah; her mom is friends with my mom, and she started at this college last year. We're from different small towns, but our swim teams competed against each other at districts. Hannah, I'm learning, is pre-med, and also very, very fast in the water.

Let me explain—for as long as I can remember, water has been my home. Every kid, at some point, has a moment when they realize they can push themselves and get better at something, or rather maybe every kid has a moment when they realize that pushing themselves has already made them better. It's frightening, horrifying even to realize that the person you've taken yourself to be can change with so little effort; it's as if the furniture of your world has blown out into space and suddenly you understand how close the stars are.

For me, this moment was joining the swim team. I always knew I could swim, but within a year I knew I could swim. Adults lined up to ask my mom if they could make a project out of me—my coach, Mrs. Aksel from the Boosters, even the local paper knew my name. Everyone wanted to know how good I could get, how far I would go.

In the end nobody offered me any money. I could have chosen a college where I could easily swim on the swim team, but I didn't. Instead, I chose a school where the swim team was so much better than I was that even for me it would be hard to join. I'd told myself I would have to work harder than in high school, that I was going to have to live up to my promise, but I also wondered if I was hopelessly outclassed.

And my mom's friend's daughter, Hannah is on the swim team and today is day one.

(continues on next page)

She gives me her no-mercy grin. I know this because she tells me, “This is my no-mercy grin—Are you ready?” and we start off in adjacent lanes. *Crawl. Speed.* By the time we get back she's fifteen seconds ahead of me and looking wryly at her nails. I take six big breaths and yell, “GO!” before she's in position and this time, when we pull up, she has (*I think*) a bit more respect on her face. We continue for half an hour, then she has to get to a study session. I haven't embarrassed myself.

The itch in my ear has blossomed into pain—sharp, familiar pain. I have ear drops in my swim bag, I tip my head to the side and drizzle them into the canal, hoping I haven't burst something again.

Elizabeth has mono. She's wrapped up in a blanket on her bunk, watching *Lost* on DVD with me. I don't think she's left this floor of the dorm since Monday when she went to student health and got a pass. I haven't gotten mono yet but the pain in my ear is still there. The drops control it mostly, but I can still feel the pressure.

Now I feel like I have a snotty nose, and if I just snork hard enough it will run down my throat and leave my face alone. It doesn't work. I keep interrupting the show with my fruitless snorks.

On the screen, Kate is introducing herself to the sheep farmer. I've seen this episode, but somehow Elizabeth has never seen the show at all. I got the DVD at the library before she got sick, hoping I could blow her mind, but I can't tell if she's even following the story. I'm mostly through a bowl of popcorn and she hasn't even started on hers. *Snork. Munch, munch.* Elizabeth is barely even awake.

I'm thinking through my first marketing project, due Monday. Pick a charity and make a magazine page to encourage people to donate. I haven't even picked an organization yet. My plan is to ask for volunteer hours, and then to include a way to donate money in the smaller print at the bottom. It stands to reason people will give more money when they feel guilty about not offering their time. I feel very clever for this.

“Hey,” says Elizabeth. I look over, surprised. “Are you getting sick too? You keep snuffing your nose like that.” I hadn't realized she was awake again. *Munch, munch. Snork.*

(continues on next page)



Ear Swarm by Alysha Cypher // Paint Markers on Door

The pain in my mouth and throat is so intense I want to vomit and I can't. I can barely swallow or talk. Student health gave me a Z-Pak of antibiotics and Hannah brought me a thin chicken soup. She tells me about how sick she got her first semester, how she could barely get out of bed and her roommate called an ambulance. She says it's the curse of small-town girls, how the city welcomes us to its world—we grow up without all the illnesses before and then we get them all at once.

This sounds so smart to me I wish I could say something back. What comes out is like, "HLAW." Even nodding makes my throat hurt.

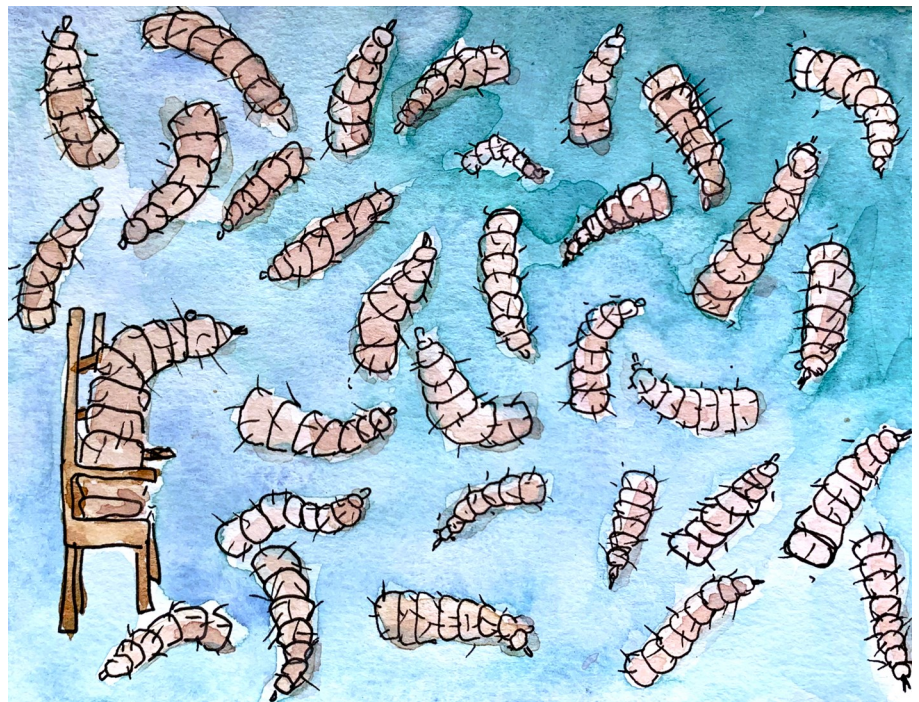
Elizabeth comes home at lunch to check my temperature and see if I've eaten. She looks startled when she sees me and brings a mirror; my face is so swollen I look like someone else entirely. She asks if I took my antibiotics and I wave at the packet on the counter. I drift with the fever, taking children's Tylenol because it's liquid.

On the second day I feel something in my throat and cough it up; in the puddle of greenish phlegm and blood is a shrivelled, strange twist of what looks like meat. One side has a strange rough texture. I reach down to pick it up but I can't remember ever eating anything like it. The pain is suddenly less though and when I check my temperature, the fever has broken. I still cannot talk.

* * *

I am at another party, filling a plate from a tray of nachos. I am talking about my hometown again, only this time I say that where I come from grownups pretend to know more about the world than they do, and live terrified that their incomprehension is permanent and terminal. People are listening to me. I know one from my marketing class, another from the pool. I pivot elegantly to the war. I say that we have invaded Iraq—that we have re-elected the man who invaded Iraq—because it was easier than admitting we couldn't understand him. I point out the emotional blackmail: anyone afraid to admit they feel dumb can be talked into agreeing to anything.

I am not saying any of these things. I have never previously thought them until I hear them coming out of my mouth. I excuse myself to the bathroom and open my mouth in the mirror. My tongue splits along its leading edge, the top and bottom parting to reveal rows of sharp needle teeth. My New Worldly tongue is smiling at me. There are boys at this party, and their ears are. . . delectable.



The Seated Maggot by Jude Nel Horney // Watercolors & Ink

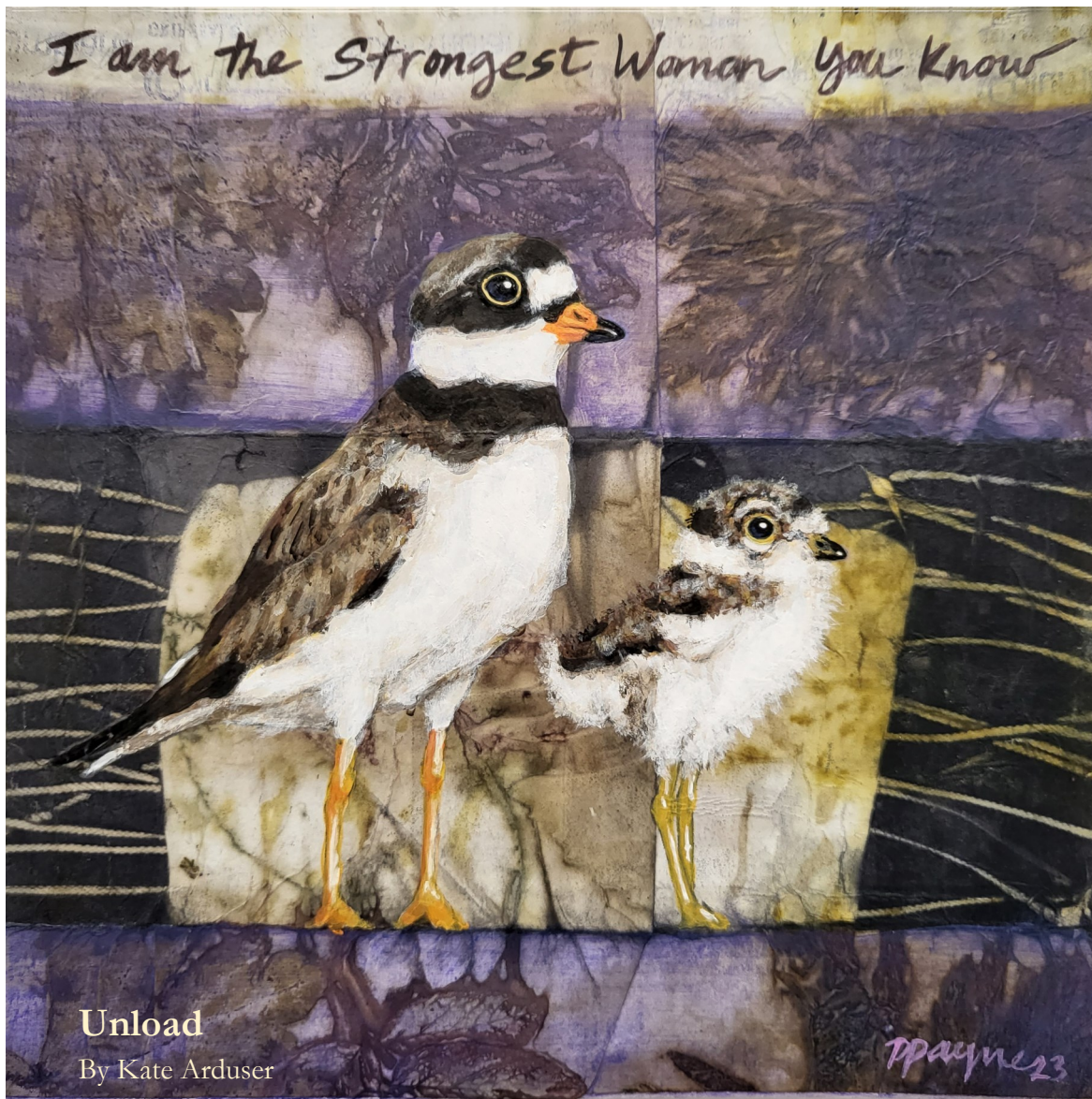


Yellow Halibut by P. Payne // Acrylics on Botanical Printed Paper (courtesy of Tanya Zastrow)

Halibut

By Peter Solberg

Two eyes from the depths
Attacks the bait with vigor
A pull and a tug



Plovers by P. Payne // Acrylics on Botanical Printed Paper (courtesy of Tanya Zastron)

We carried our too heavy and awkwardly arranged
Boxes
Down the sidewalk
Heading to Salvation Army
Intent to offload
All this stuff that took so much effort to let go of.

And she said flatly to me,
“Where are the strong men when you need them?”
And I said flatly to her, “We are the strong men.”
And she shrugged and handed her weight over.
And I skipped out of there
light and boisterous and bold.

Wild Woman

By Alysha Cypher



Photograph by Reid Garcia

When the wild erupts in a woman
Her skin is tight
Too singular
Wanting to burst free into the sky and sea

Dive to where the light can't touch
Thrive in the cold and dark
To scream

Fly to the highest point
Fall like rain to the ground
To howl

Wrap around every tree
Steady what's left of the mind
To breathe

Shrink into the ground
March with the ants
To live

Find kinship in others
Who feel the wild need
To emerge

The Interview

By Jillian Gold

I interviewed for a job recently
And maybe I'd forgotten or
Isn't it that I've never known
How

To want

To sell

My worth

Doesn't matter
How many times
We play through
This stock exchange
Always hits me
Like a curveball

Where do I see myself in five years, you ask
My vocabulary blanks
I'm a doodle in the margin

Where I'm headed has never mattered
But I don't say exactly that

You're taking notes and
Say something simple, sweet
"Going with the flow. . ."

* * *

I am a torrent
Of creativity and emotion

I often feel captive in a workplace
In a domestic arrangement
In a scheduled meeting
In the construct of Time
Whose traps I've learned to escape
Though bottled and stoppered in glass
Riding the current within what confines
Myself pouring constant, over and back
And knowing

I will find outlet

But I don't say exactly that



Watercolors by Sergei Bogatchev

Fight the Battle Impossible

By Simone Raymond

Renunciates,
The Courage bound.
Living Scriptures
In the Round.

Sword of Truth,
And, all the Things,
That are Rejected,
By Popes and Kings.

Trial by Fire.
And, of Ice.
Game of Chance,
Roll the Dice.

History.
With its Heroes there.
Eternal Dove
In the Air.

Harp and Strings,
Trumpets Sound.
Inner Journey,
Is Glory found.

On the Winds,
We do Send,
Seeds of Beauty,
To Comprehend.

The Sage, the Fool.
All the Players.
Meaning
In its many Layers.

Sorrow's Tears
Of Tribulation.
Joy and Wonder
Bring Exaltation.

Thrown upon
The Threshing Floor,
Alive in Real Time,
Ancient Lore.

As Crashing Waves,
And Oceans Surge,
The Vault of Heaven
Is Where Stars Emerge.

For Sin shall be
Turned to Stone,
When we Learn,
To Walk Alone.

Wringell Caterpillar by Brian Varner





Emerging . . .

By Joseph

Photograph by David Saiget

I wasn't born yesterday
I was born today
With the mind of God
And a tail to play

My heart is my own
It belongs to another
Until she shows up
It's kept by my mother

I'm deep sea fishin'
In the ocean above
Hopin' I can find
My one true love

Lots of flowers
Growing in the garden
Plenty of practice
For my heart to harden

I wasn't born yesterday
I'm not so naive
Not all will see me
Or truly believe

It's a catch and release
Moby Dick's a minnow
My lady sleeps
Under one mighty willow

I'll be ready
She'll one day rise
It's still morning
Waiting for full sunrise

I caught a glimpse
Elevens she wore
When she left my site
My heart she tore

Another scar to wear
I'm still not afraid
In God I do trust
My fare I have paid

A test that I failed
Still gettin' to my knee
She thinks I went down
But she still can't see

Two more to go
It's gonna hurt like hell
I won't settle for less
For my wedding bell

The last ones for show
One that I'll truly know
She'll weave in my flow
And have a trumpet to blow . . .

My Mountain's Lion

By Steve Schoonmaker—F/V Saulteur

Authenticity waits patiently
under Starlight's vast enormity
My Mountain's Lion
lays for me

Sees through
my false conformity
with Yellow Eyes
that tempt retreat
It slips my grip
It slips my feet
on Fear
which just leads
to incomplete

Like Sun struck steam
released in dream
I rise from judgments
boulders
I bead upon the shoulders
of my own
Mountain's Lion
I'm blocking denying's
inevitably . . .
Authenticity waiting
patiently

I Rise...
Rise Free
Free from judgments
boulders
over there
looking over their shoulders
Right on past
what the others might think
up to conformity's precipice
brink

in an authentic alpenglow pink
chains can dissolve
to the very last link

If I leap
with a Heart
and a Spirit
in sync
Just leap
on the spine of my own Mountain's Lion
Authenticity waiting
patiently

Under Starlight's vast enormity
My Mountain's Lion lays for me
sees through
straight through
my false conformity
Yea,
with Yellow eyes
that tempt retreat
as I notice it
as it watches me

Breaking free
of false
conformity
breaking free
from a
judgmental
mold
on the sleek
tawny
Gold
of guard hairs
just
let down

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Breaking free
from the norms
I've been sold
or
conforming my life
for some Gold
or
acting my age
as I'm older
or
Keeping passion's flames
to a smolder

Like Sun struck steam
released in dream
I rise
from judgments
boulders
I bead upon the shoulders
on the spine
of my own Mountain's Lion

Under Starlight's vast enormity
Authenticity waiting
patiently.



Photograph by David Saiget

The Archeologist:

The Growth of a Spiritual Garden as Seen by a Little Green Creature That Lived There

By Gabe Cap

A stone room. A wooden chair. The walls are bare. Except for webs and dust hanging in that musty air. The floor is covered with dried vines, of the roof there is no sign, so dark so deep no light dare shine.

But I am here and here I've been, waiting and watching for what must be millennium. I've grown quite comfortable here in my time. But wait what is that I see, a light does shine! Falling to the ground a torch then a rope lands with a pound and out from there a man slides down.

"There is nothing for you here," I whisper. No more gold, no more treasure here. The fruit withered long ago and no longer do such gifts grow.

"No. Don't you draw anymore near, or I'll have to catch you in my snare."

But he pulls out a compass and a map and deftly avoids all of my traps.

He approaches the back wall where there is an inscription he can read:

Requiem Æternum

"Right," so now you see, it's times for you to turn and leave.

He pulls out a key. And a door hidden even from me, me the one bound to protect this lair for all eternity, cracks open and breath flows through the door carrying strange scents that make me cough and snarl. I watch as he walks through with his torch. Then down to the door frame I fly to see what in the next room could possibly be!

A little red dirt path that passes through a field of golden grass. In the middle a large oak tree empty of leaves. I walk down the path and over the hill. Where there are crowds of sunflowers standing still.

"This room is bigger and far more wide than I should ever care to be inside." Violets and geraniums start to grow up between my toes. This feeling makes me want to cough and choke. I turn around back toward the lair, I watch the oak tree sprout leaves; no longer bare.

Back inside and back through the door, the vines filled with fruit are crawling all over the floor. The blooms make me cough and sneer. The lights are getting much too bright in here.

"No, I suppose this just won't do. I am afraid I will have to move."



Green Man by Rob Brown // Acrylic Paint Markers

Green Man

By Rob "Professor" Brown

There is a little green man that lives inside of me
Not biological but metaphorically
He's building prison walls of stones bed in lies
I'm going to escape someday
And let my spirit fly

#Sobriquet: Snow Falling Through Spruce Tips

By Barbra Donachy



Photograph by Barbra & Jack Donachy

Jack and I have had a long and amorous relationship with alcohol—separately and then together. The affinity began with pure fun at social events and evolved along with our experiences with food. Wine appreciation classes educated us about things like terroir and the effects of climate on grape sugar content and flavor. Experimenting with wine pairings became a regular part of dining. Later we began brewing beer, my coffee infused stout a favorite.

Did you notice the verb tense? 2024 ushered in a new chapter in our home. We have decided that as we age, alcohol no longer plays a part in “the coolest versions of ourselves we can imagine.” Taking stock, we’ve noticed that the very best moments in our life these past several years have been those in which we were totally clear-headed—on our bicycles

coasting down a mountain road in Hokkaido on a summer morning, watching salmon come to our flies, unexpectedly coming upon rare flowers during a hike. Besides, the previous consensus among health experts that a drink or two can be part of a healthy lifestyle has changed. The current thinking is that no amount of alcohol is good for you. So, we’re in. Whole heartedly. The only challenging part of the shift has been giving up food pairings with wine and various mixed drinks.

Over the years, we’ve become agreeably knowledgeable in presenting meals, even multi-course meals, with complementary beverage pairings. Instead of “wining” about it, we’ve decided to take on the challenge of creating non-alcoholic beverages to go with the meals we serve.

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For years, I've been making syrups from locally foraged plants. My pantry regularly includes products made from wineberry (aka nagoonberry), wild strawberry, salmonberry, wild blueberry, rhubarb, lingonberry and spruce tips. Right from the beginning, spruce tip syrup became a favorite stir-in with gin and soda water. So, I decided that spruce tip syrup would be a good place to start experimenting with our new elixirs.

After coming up with a collection of delicious non-alcoholic recipes, we thought we might introduce these recipes on our blog. But we soon found that a problem confronted us.

“Mocktails” has become the consensus name for alcohol-free cocktails, particularly as the post-pandemic movement away from alcoholic drinks has gained momentum. But the “mock” in mocktails - “scorn, tease, laugh at” - kinda ruins it, right? Granted the term has been around since the 1930s, but surely...

I suggested to Jack that we come up with a better appellation for our libations.

And so, we present to you the first world's first #sobriquet. Let Webster's be notified:

#sobriquet | 'sōbrə,kā | noun
pl sobriquets 1. A non-alcoholic cocktail:

Let us enjoy the non-intoxicating flavor of this #sobriquet.

I hope you will try the recipe for *Snow Falling Through Spruce Tips*. Cheers!

Snow Falling Through Spruce Tips

Ingredients for Two

- 6 tablespoons spruce tip syrup
- Soda water to almost fill the glass
- 2 teaspoons of heavy whipping cream
- Young spruce tip needles for garnish (*optional*)

Directions

1. Place 3 tablespoons of spruce tip syrup at the bottom of each chilled highboy glass.
2. Pour a small amount of soda water into each glass.
3. Mix thoroughly.
4. Gently fill the glasses near to the top with additional soda water.
5. Gently stir in a teaspoon of heavy whipping cream into mixture.
6. Sprinkle a few young spruce tip needles atop each drink and enjoy immediately.

Check out Barbra & Jack's blog at: cutterlight.com



Don't Forget to Fly // Embroidered Collage by Pamela J. Peterson